

Somerville's Commission for Persons With Disabilities was established by Municipal Ordinance in 1992 and its Bylaws are compatible with State law.<sup>1</sup>

## **MISSION & OBJECTIVES**

The mission of the Somerville Commission for Persons With Disabilities is twofold:

- ❖ To ensure that all persons living, working and visiting the City of Somerville have full and equal access to all programs and services within the City; and
- ❖ To enable people with disabilities to achieve their full potential.

Our objectives move us toward the vision of a completely inclusive environment:

- To provide our constituents with current and accurate information, resources and opportunities to enrich their lives;
- To analyze and remove structural, policy, programmatic and attitudinal barriers to equal civic participation opportunities for Somerville's diverse citizenry;
- To develop mutually beneficial collaborations and activities with City Administration & Departments through dialogue and resource-building;
- To initiate statewide economic, educational and cultural partnerships which enhance the lives of persons with disabilities;
- To educate and assist local businesses to become ADA-compliant; and
- To foster best-practices technology and methodology in the planning and implementation of City infrastructure and community activities, meeting the needs of Somerville's diverse populations.

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<sup>1</sup> M.G.L. c. 40, § 8J and 22G : A city or town, which accepts the provisions of this Section, is authorized to establish a Disability Commission. Commissions work with the Office on Disability to carry out programs and activities designed to integrate people with disabilities into the community. The specific activities of a Commission depend on the needs of the disabled community in the particular city or town.

Commissions consist of five to nine members, and are appointed by the mayor or city manager in cities or by the selectmen or town manager in towns. The majority of members must be disabled, and one must be an immediate family member of a disabled person. One member of the Commission must be an elected or appointed official of the city or town. Members are initially appointed in staggered one, two and three year terms. A Commission must have at least six meetings per year, keep records of its meetings and actions, and file an annual report.

Commissions generally are authorized to receive gifts and other funds, under Section 8J. For the benefit of persons with disabilities, cities and towns which have chosen to implement a Handicapped Parking Program may empower Commissions to receive and administer fines from violations of the Handicapped Parking Law, under Section 22G. The details of these funding decisions are left to the collaborative efforts of officials in the local communities. For more information, contact the Massachusetts Office on Disability. Web:

<http://mass.gov/mod/MunicipalCommissionList.html>